

acid, aa<sub>x</sub>, at its N terminus, wherein said amino acid aa<sub>x</sub> is connected via its N-terminal to a test signal peptide [to tested];

(b) determining expression rate by measuring said hirudin or hirudin derivative activity in the culture supernatant;

(c) repeating steps (a) and (b) with various signal peptides;

(d) selecting said [suitable] signal peptide by comparing the expression rates represented by the hirudin or hirudin derivative antithrombotic activity found in step (b).

Claim 8. (Twice Amended) The process of claim 6, further comprising expressing said [suitable] signal peptide and the desired hirudin or hirudin derivative protein in E. coli via a nucleic acid construct, wherein secretion of the desired hirudin or hirudin derivative protein and said [suitable] signal peptide occurs with simultaneous elimination of said [suitable] signal peptide.

9. The process of claim [any one of claims] 6[, 7, or 8] wherein the desired hirudin or hirudin derivative protein is hirudin.

#### REMARKS

Claims 6-9 are now pending. In the last Office Action, the Examiner maintained rejections under §112 and §103. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. However, in effort to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended the claims by this amendment to address the Examiner's concerns and suggestions. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 6-9 in condition for allowance.